

JTA, Beep & NAVYA AVs Help Transport COVID-19 Tests Collected at Mayo Clinic Drive-Thru

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The Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA), Beep Inc. and NAVYA partner with Mayo Clinic to safely transport COVID-19 samples on their Jacksonville Campus

JACKSONVILLE, (APRIL 2, 2020) – For the first time in the United States, autonomous vehicles are being used to transport medical supplies and COVID-19 tests at Mayo Clinic in Florida.

At a time when healthcare resources and personnel are stretched thin, the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) has partnered with Beep and NAVYA to use autonomous vehicles to facilitate the safe transport of COVID-19 tests collected at a drive-thru testing location at Mayo Clinic in Florida.

“This deployment is a historic moment for the Jacksonville Transportation Authority,” said JTA Chief Executive Officer Nathaniel P. Ford Sr. “Along with our partners Beep, NAVYA and Mayo Clinic, we are leveraging our learnings from three years of testing autonomous vehicles through our Ultimate Urban Circulator program. Our innovative team saw this as an opportunity to use technology to respond to this crisis in Northeast Florida and increase the safety of COVID-19 testing.”

On Monday, March 30, 2020, up to four autonomous vehicles began operating along an initial route, in full autonomous mode without attendants or other people onboard, to transport COVID-19 tests from a drive-thru testing site to a processing laboratory on Mayo Clinic’s campus. The COVID-19 test samples are placed in secure containers prior to Mayo Clinic healthcare professionals loading the samples onto the shuttle.

“During a time of rapid change and uncertainty, the ability to think innovatively alongside the Jacksonville Transportation Authority, NAVYA, and Beep during the pandemic has strengthened all of our teams through community collaboration,” said Kent Thielen, M.D., CEO, Mayo Clinic in Florida. “Using artificial intelligence enables us to protect staff from exposure to this contagious virus by using cutting edge autonomous vehicle technology, and frees up staff time that can be dedicated to direct treatment and care for patients. We are grateful to JTA, Beep, and NAVYA for their partnership in these challenging times.”

The JTA, Beep, NAVYA and Bestmile teams partnered to create, test and deploy the routes for the autonomous vehicles at Mayo Clinic in Florida to address the fluid developments of the COVID-19 pandemic. The routes are isolated from pedestrians, traffic and staff. Beep, Mayo Clinic and the JTA will closely monitor the service from a mobile command center to maintain safe operation.

“Mayo Clinic is known as a leader in innovation and technology for providing world-class healthcare services to their patients in so many important areas of medicine,” said Joe Moyer, CEO, Beep, Inc. “It is both humbling and exciting to partner with them in bringing this innovative solution to support such a critical challenge facing our country. We are equally as proud to work with our partners at the JTA, NAVYA and Bestmile, a fleet orchestration and optimization software company, in making this happen and doing our part to support this important cause.”

Beep, an autonomous shuttle fleet service provider, transported the shuttles through Eagle Express Inc. from Lake Nona, Florida, an innovation hub 150 miles away where the company is headquartered in Orlando, Florida. An additional shuttle is being utilized from the JTA’s Ultimate Urban Circulator (U2C) program. The JTA has actively tested AV technology since 2017 to prepare for a conversion and expansion of its Skyway automated people mover in Downtown Jacksonville into a network powered by autonomous vehicles.

“The opportunity to work together with these organizations in an effort to provide a dedicated COVID-19 testing solution represents our goal as a company, and that’s to create a more accessible solution in the moments that matter, whether that be crisis, shortage in manpower and resources, or other areas we can provide aid in,” said Étienne Hermite, CEO of NAVYA.

The use of the autonomous vehicles to safely transport and handle the COVID-19 samples is another example of how these vehicles can be repurposed in times of need.

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Photos courtesy of Mayo Clinic

ABOUT MAYO CLINIC

Mayo Clinic is a nonprofit organization committed to innovation in clinical practice, education and research, and providing compassion, expertise and answers to everyone who needs healing. Visit the Mayo Clinic News Network for additional Mayo Clinic news and An Inside Look at Mayo Clinic for more information about Mayo.

ABOUT BEEP

Beep, Inc. (“Beep”) founded by experienced fleet managers and technology entrepreneurs, offers the next generation of transportation services for autonomous passenger mobility to fleet owners and operators in low speed environments across the public and private sector, including transportation hubs, medical and university campuses, residential communities, town centers, and more. Beep’s operations are headquartered in Lake Nona, Orlando. Learn more about Beep on their [website](#).

ABOUT THE JACKSONVILLE TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (JTA)

The Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) is an independent agency of the state of Florida, serving Duval County, with multi-modal responsibilities. The JTA designs and constructs bridges and highways and provides varied mass transit services. These include express and regular bus service, monorail, ferry and on-demand services. The JTA serves the largest city in the continental U.S. in terms of landmass. An integrated transportation network is a critical element in any community to properly manage growth, provide mobility and offer a good quality of life. Learn more at their [website](#).

ABOUT NAVYA

NAVYA is a top French name in autonomous driving systems. With over 280 employees in France (Paris and Lyon) and in the United States (Saline, Michigan), NAVYA is a leading specialist in the supply of autonomous driving systems for passenger and goods transport. Since 2015, NAVYA has been the first to market and put into service autonomous mobility solutions in cities and private sites across the globe. For more information, visit their [website](#).

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